



THE MEDIA SCHOOL

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

February 21, 2018

Chairman Ajit V. Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Bridging the Digital Divide for Low-Income Consumers, WC Docket Nos. 17-287, 11-42, 09-197

Dear Chairman Pai:

I am a researcher at Indiana University's Media School with an expertise on digital inequalities. For years I have been researching digital disruption, and Lifeline in particular. First, it is clear from my research that Lifeline is essential for citizens in order to stay in touch with doctors, employers, educators, etc. (Gonzales, 2014, 2016). Second, the steps proposed by the FCC under the current order would limit access to these essential services.

Specific concerns include:

- The proposed outright elimination of the Lifeline Broadband Provider designation created by the 2016 Lifeline Order (paragraph 55).
- The elimination of non-facilities based ETCs (paragraphs 62 and 64).
- A cap or reduction in the Lifeline budget.

I have worked extensively with Lifeline users in New York, Indiana and California. From my research it is clear that Lifeline services are just that: a life line to personal and institutional support systems. I know people that run out of minutes because of frequent calls to the doctor or employers. Others describe difficulties getting jobs because of constraints on library computers and smartphones. Limiting the number of providers for cell and broadband service will make these matters worse.

My concern is that steps proposed in the most recent order will benefit major corporations and hurt individuals and small-organizations. Please reconsider taking steps that would undermine a vital service for individual American citizens and the competitiveness of the American economy over years to come.

Sincerely,

Amy Gonzales
Assistant Professor
Media School
Indiana University